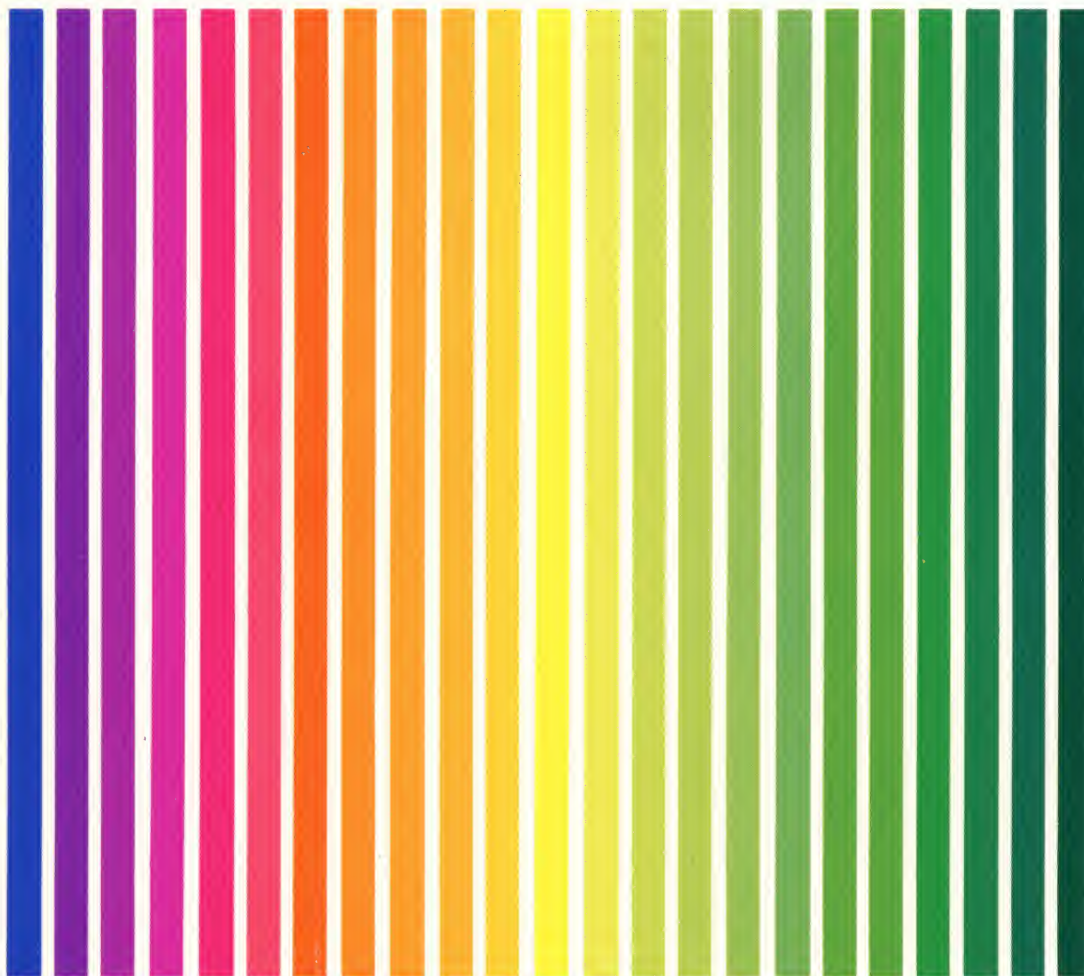


APX ATARI® PROGRAM EXCHANGE



Gray Chang

DOG DAZE

APX-10069 APX-20069

User-Written Software for ATARI Home Computers

DOG DAZE

by

Gray Chang

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INTRODUCTION

OVERVIEW

DOG DAZE is a fast-paced, two-player action game of skill, strategy, and luck. You control your dog with your joystick. Each time a fire hydrant pops up on the screen, you scramble to claim it before your opponent. You claim a hydrant by running into it or by shooting your bone at it. If you shoot your bone and miss, you'll have to retrieve the bone before you can shoot it again.

Each time a hydrant is claimed, it changes to the color of the claimant and another unclaimed hydrant pops up. As the game progresses, more and more claimed hydrants fill the screen. You can run right through your own hydrants, but if you run into your opponent's hydrants, you're penalized.

A reckless driver drives through occasionally, knocking out the hydrants in his path. You must be careful to stay out of his way.

The winner is the player with the higher score when the time limit runs out, or the first player to score 16 points more than his or her opponent. A scoreboard of fire hydrants keeps the score.

REQUIRED ACCESSORIES

For the cassette version:

8K RAM

ATARI 410 Program Recorder

For the diskette version:

24K RAM

ATARI 810 Disk Drive

Two ATARI Joystick Controllers

GETTING STARTED

LOADING DOG DAZE INTO COMPUTER MEMORY

1. Remove any cartridge from the cartridge slot of the computer.
2. Plug the joystick controllers into the first and second controller jacks on the front of the computer console.
3. If the computer is on, turn it off.
4. If you have the cassette version of DOG DAZE:
 - a. Insert the DOG DAZE cassette into the program recorder. Press REWIND to make sure that the tape is rewound to the beginning, and then press STOP. Press PLAY to prepare the program recorder for loading the program.
 - b. Press the START key and hold it down. Turn on the computer. When the computer beeps, release the START key.
 - c. Press the RETURN key. The program will load into computer memory and start automatically.

If you have the diskette version of DOG DAZE:

- a. Turn on the disk drive.
- b. When the BUSY light goes out, open the disk drive door and insert the DOG DAZE diskette with the label face-up in the right-hand corner nearest you. (Use Drive 1 if you have more than one drive.)
- c. Turn on the computer. The program will load into computer memory and start automatically.

STARTING THE GAME

The program displays the words "DOG DAZE" and some brief instructions. Press the START key. The playfield border, the fire hydrant scoreboard, and two dogs appear, and some music plays for a few seconds. When the music stops, you can set the options described later, or you can begin playing immediately.

PLAYING DOG DAZE

Hold your joystick controller with the red trigger button towards your upper left. The eight joystick directions correspond to the eight directions that your dog can move: up, down, left, right, and four diagonal directions. Move your joystick in any direction to start the game action. A flashing unclaimed fire hydrant appears on the screen.

You and your opponent race to claim the flashing hydrant. There are two ways to claim it: by running into it and by shooting your bone at it. To launch your bone, press the red trigger button while you (the dog) are running vertically or horizontally. The bone shoots out in the direction you're running. You can't launch the bone while standing still or while running diagonally.

The bone can't pass through any fire hydrant, so don't shoot unless you have a clear shot. If you hit the flashing hydrant, you claim it and get your bone back automatically. If you miss, you must retrieve your bone before you can shoot it again. Even if you don't retrieve your bone, you can still claim the flashing hydrant by running into it.

Each hydrant you claim stops flashing and changes to your color, and belongs to you for the rest of the game. As soon as the flashing hydrant is claimed, a new one appears on the screen in a randomly chosen place. Again, you and your opponent race to claim it first.

As the game progresses, more and more claimed hydrants occupy the playfield. You can run through your own hydrants without any ill effect. However, if you run into your opponent's hydrant, you're frozen in place for two seconds.

Every once in awhile, reckless driver beeps his horn and drives his car through the playfield. You lose if the car hits you, so you should take evasive action as soon as you hear the horn. When you hear the first beep, the flashing hydrant and the bones disappear from the screen to remind you of the danger. The car enters the playfield from the left and knocks out most of the hydrants in its path, removing them from the screen, but without affecting the score.

After the car has passed, the flashing hydrant reappears in another spot and you get your bone back automatically, even if you didn't have it when the car first appeared.

Sometimes the car knocks out gaps in the playfield border. Be careful not to shoot your bone through a gap, because the bone will fly off the screen. You won't be able to get it back until the reckless driver comes again. (You always get your bone back after the car passes through.)

SCORING

You score one point each time you claim a hydrant, and one point each time your opponent runs into one of your claimed hydrants. The scoreboard automatically keeps track of the score.

The scoreboard consists of the 16 hydrants at the top of the screen. At the start of the game, the eight light hydrants on the left and eight dark hydrants on the right indicate that the score is even for the light and dark dogs. Each time you score a point, half of one scoreboard hydrant changes from your opponent's color to your color. Each time your opponent scores a point, half of one scoreboard hydrant changes from your color back to your opponent's color. You can see who is ahead, and by how many points, by looking at the position of the dividing line between the light and dark hydrants. However, the scoreboard doesn't show the total number of points scored.

WINNING

DOG DAZE can end in any of three ways:

1. One player is ahead by 16 points, filling the scoreboard with one color. (The winner is the player who filled the scoreboard.)
2. One player is hit by the reckless driver. (The winner is the player who was not hit.)
3. The time limit runs out. (The winner is the player with more hydrants in the scoreboard.)

When any one of these three events occurs, the game ends--all action on the screen stops, the scoreboard flashes, and some music plays briefly. When the music stops, you can start a new game.

STARTING A NEW GAME

Press the START key to start a new game at any time--before, during, or after a game. The playfield clears, the dogs return to the center of the playfield, the scoreboard resets to eight light and eight dark hydrants, and some music plays briefly. When the music stops, you may set the options described on the next page, or you may start the game action immediately by moving your joystick in any direction.

If the time limit runs out and you want to continue playing the same game, don't press the START key. Set the options, if desired, as you would for a new game, and then move your joystick in any direction to resume the game action.

If the previous game ended any other way, you can't resume the same game. You must press the START key and start a new game.

SETTING THE OPTIONS

DOG DAZE has two options--Time Limit and Handicap. You may set these options after the music stops, but before starting the game action.

TIME LIMIT OPTION--SELECT KEY

To select the time limit, press and hold down the SELECT key. Small clocks appear, one at a time, underneath the scoreboard. Each clock represents one minute of play time. You may select from 1 to 16 minutes. Release the SELECT key when the desired number of clocks have appeared. All the clocks disappear when the game action starts. (The computer doesn't let you know how much time is left during the game.)

If you don't select a time limit, the computer assumes a time limit of 16 minutes. If you want a shorter time limit, you must set the desired number of minutes before playing each game.

HANDICAP OPTION--JOYSTICK TRIGGER BUTTON

To set the handicap option, press and hold down the red trigger button on your joystick controller. Hydrants appear on the screen, one at a time, until you release the button. These hydrants already belong to your opponent, so they're obstacles to you, making your movement around the playfield more difficult. Using this option doesn't affect the starting score.

Either player, or both players, can use this option. When both players use this option, movement around the playfield is more difficult for both players. However, you and your opponent can select a different number of handicap hydrants.

HELPFUL HINTS

DOG DAZE is a simple game, depending mostly on manual dexterity and luck, but it does have some elements of strategy.

POSITIONING YOUR DOG

Keep in mind that the computer chooses the new hydrant location randomly. It doesn't "remember" where it put the last hydrant. A new unclaimed hydrant is just as likely to appear near the previous one as any other place in the playfield. Therefore, you shouldn't wait on the opposite side of the screen while your opponent goes into a corner to claim a hydrant. Try to position yourself between your opponent and the largest empty space on the screen. That way, you'll have a better chance of being closer than your opponent to the new hydrant when it appears.

USING YOUR BONE

Remember to use your bone. It travels twice as fast as you or your opponent can run, so it offers a tremendous speed advantage. Remember that when you launch the bone, you must be running vertically or horizontally in the direction you want to shoot. The computer doesn't automatically shoot the bone towards the target. A good way to control the bone direction is to position your dog, let go of the joystick, press the red trigger button, and then push the joystick in the desired direction while holding down the trigger button.

When your bone misses the target and gets stuck on your opponent's hydrant, it is always possible to retrieve the bone without running into the hydrant. Try to approach the bone from a direction such that if you overshoot the bone location, you don't run into the hydrant.

GETTING STUCK

When you run into your opponent's claimed hydrant, you're frozen in place for two seconds and lose a point. However, after the two seconds, you have a one-second immunity against this kind of penalty. As soon as you can move again, move away from your opponent's hydrant, or else you'll be penalized again!

AVOIDING THE RECKLESS DRIVER

The reckless driver always approaches from the left side, so as soon as you hear the horn, run towards the right. Then you'll have more time to avoid getting hit. Try to position yourself in an area where your opponent has few claimed hydrants, so you can move around without getting stuck. If the car is heading towards you, run straight up or down to get out of its way.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The following information about the DOG DAZE program may be of interest to ATARI computer programmers.

DOG DAZE was programmed entirely in assembly language, using an ATARI 800 computer, an ATARI 410 Program Recorder, an ATARI Assembler Editor Cartridge, and 32K of RAM. Using assembly language allows very fast processing of the controller inputs, screen information, graphics, and sounds. By comparison, if you were to convert DOG DAZE to run in ATARI BASIC, the bone would fly across the screen in a few minutes instead of a few seconds.

The object code for DOG DAZE occupies slightly more than 4K of RAM. The screen display, display list, and player-missile graphics together require less than 2K of RAM, so DOG DAZE fits into a computer with 8K of RAM.

The dogs and bones are two-line resolution players; the fire hydrants and playfield border are ANTIC mode 4 characters. This character mode is not supported by the GRAPHICS statement of ATARI BASIC.

All action and sounds are synchronized to the TV frame by using the VCOUNT register. This register gives the current TV scan line number. As soon as the TV electron beam has finished drawing the bottom border on the screen (VCOUNT=112), the 6502 processor checks for collisions, updates the screen memory and player-missile graphics memory, updates the sounds, and performs miscellaneous chores. The processor finishes all of its DOG DAZE duties before the TV starts drawing the top border for the next frame.

DOG DAZE uses all four sound voices to maximize the possible number of simultaneous sounds. Each sound lasts up to 16 frames, or about one-fourth of a second. The volume and pitch are updated once every frame.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I sincerely hope that you enjoy playing DOG DAZE. I welcome any comments, suggestions, or questions concerning the program or instructions. Just write to me at the address below. If you would like a reply, please enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

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ATARI PROGRAM EXCHANGE

REVIEW FORM

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1. Name and APX number of program _____

2. If you have problems using the program, please describe them here.

3. What do you especially like about this program?

4. What do you think the program's weaknesses are?

5. How can the catalog description be more accurate and/or comprehensive?

6. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 being "poor" and 10 being "excellent", please rate the following aspects of this program?

- _____ Easy to use
- _____ User-oriented (e.g., menus, prompts, clear language)
- _____ Enjoyable
- _____ Self-instructive
- _____ Useful (non-game software)
- _____ Imaginative graphics and sound

7. Describe any technical errors you found in the user instructions (please give page numbers).

8. What did you especially like about the user instructions?

9. What revisions or additions would improve these instructions?

10. On a scale of 1 to 10, 1 representing "poor" and 10 representing "excellent", how would you rate the user instructions and why?

11. Other comments about the software or user instructions:

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